

ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

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## ASMFC Winter Meeting

February 4-6, 2014  
Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria

### Preliminary Agenda

Please note: The agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of meetings. Interested parties should anticipate meetings starting earlier or later than indicated below.

#### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

8:00 - 9:00 AM	Atlantic Herring Section
9:15 - 10:00 AM	Winter Flounder Management Board
10:15 AM - 12:15 PM	Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board
1:15 - 4:15 PM	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board
3:00 - 4:00 PM	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Executive Committee
4:30 - 6:00 PM	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

#### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

8:00 - 10:00 AM	Executive Committee
8:30 AM - Noon	Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program Board
10:15 - 11:45 AM	Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
12:45 - 1:45 PM	Weakfish Management Board
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Business Session
3:15 - 5:45 PM	Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

8:00 - 9:30 AM	American Eel Management Board
9:45 - 10:45 AM	Shad and River Herring Management Board
11:00 - 11:45 AM	Sturgeon Management Board
12:15 - 1:15 PM	Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board
1:30 - 3:30 PM	Horseshoe Crab Management Board
3:45 - 5:15 PM	South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

## Upcoming Meetings

*The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as the deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.*

### Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III (NC)  
Chair

Douglas E. Grout (NH)  
Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal  
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield  
Science Director

Toni Kerns  
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#### **January 9 (4 PM)**

ASMFC Draft Strategic Plan State Public Input Meeting, NJ Marine Fisheries Council, Galloway Township Public Library, 306 E. Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway, NJ.

#### **January 13 (begins at 8:30 AM) -16 (ends at 3 PM)**

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Data Workshop, Florida Marine Research Institute (Conference Rooms 3A & 3B), 100 8th Ave SE, St. Petersburg, FL.

#### **January 23 (9 AM - 3 PM)**

SEAMAP Bottom Mapping Workgroup, Francis Marion Hotel, 387 King Street, Charleston, SC.

#### **January 28-30**

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Harborside, Portsmouth, NH.

#### **February 4-6**

ASMFC Winter Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA.

#### **February 11-13**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Doubletree by Hilton New Bern/ Riverfront, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, NC.

#### **March 3-7**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Hilton Savannah DeSoto, 15 East Liberty Street, Savannah, GA.

#### **March 17-20**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

#### **April 8-10**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Montauk Yacht Club, 32 Star Island Road, Montauk, NY.

#### **April 22-24**

New England Fishery Management Council, Hilton Mystic, Mystic, CT.

#### **May 12-15**

ASMFC Spring Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA.

#### **June 9-13**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sawgrass Marriott, 1000 PGA Tour Boulevard, PonteVedra Beach, FL.

#### **June 10-12**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Radisson Hotel of Freehold, 50 Gibson Place, Freehold, NJ.

#### **June 16-20**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

#### **June 17-19**

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME.



### Another Year Draws to an End: Change, Challenges, and Successes Abound

2013 was a busy year for the Commission. Commissioners initiated rebuilding programs for Southern New England lobster, American eel, and tautog, and implemented new management programs for Atlantic menhaden, black drum, and a suite of South Atlantic species. Of particular note, Commissioners adopted the first Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Black Drum, an important recreational fish throughout the Mid- and South Atlantic, and initiated a benchmark stock assessment for this poorly understood

***Guiding all these activities will be our new 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, providing us the tools and a roadmap to capitalize on new opportunities, strengthen our partnerships, and address the challenges ahead.***

species for completion in 2015. They initiated a management response to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment for American eel that indicate the U.S. population is depleted and has declined in recent decades. Addendum III provides protection to several American eel life stages, while continued work on Draft Addendum IV will focus on increased protection of glass eels. Commissioners from our northern most states made the difficult choice of closing the northern shrimp fishery for 2014 to protect the remaining spawning biomass and maximize the potential hatch. The results of the 2013 assessment report found the stock to be overfished and experiencing overfishing, with current biomass at all time lows and recruitment failure having occurred for the past three years. It is believed that unfavorable environmental conditions have played a role in the collapse of the stock and will continue to challenge our management of this cold water fishery. Commissioners also reviewed the concerning findings of the 2013 benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic striped bass indicating stock biomass is on the decline (just above the spawning stock threshold) and may continue to decline over the next couple of years due to a number of weak year classes. The good news is the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing, and managers have begun to look at changes to their recreational and commercial fisheries to provide further protection to the spawning stock.

While some of these issues are not necessarily good news from a resource perspective, they all underscore

our Commissioners' commitment to producing high quality, credible stock assessments to guide their difficult resource management decisions. The assessments, and the management decisions they inform, represent the enormous efforts of state members, federal partners, and Commission staff from data collection to assessment modeling to independent peer reviews to changes in biological reference points and management programs to on-the-water enforcement of fisheries regulations.

In 2013, we had the opportunity to honor many individuals for their outstanding contributions to Atlantic coastal fisheries habitat, science, management, and law enforcement. The recipients represented a wide range of Commission participants that included fishery managers (G. Ritchie White, Malcolm Rhodes, William Goldsborough, Bob Ross, and Tom McCloy), data managers and stock assessment scientists (Jim Gartland, Alexei Sharov and Maggie Hunter), and law enforcement officers (members of the joint Department of Justice/ NOAA Fisheries/ New Jersey Law Enforcement Team, and Captain Dorothy Thumm). Each and every one played an important role in advancing the conservation and management of Atlantic coastal fisheries resources. They all proved once again the Commission's strength lies in the individuals that make it up. The Commission is extremely fortunate to count these folks as a part of the team. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to their continued input.

Looking ahead, the Commission and its state members will continue to invest considerable resources in the conduct and review of benchmark assessments for northern shrimp, Atlantic menhaden, black drum, and Atlantic sturgeon. Fishery managers will continue to pursue ways to rebuild depleted stocks such as northern shrimp, Southern New England lobster, American eel, and shad and river herring, as well as implement adaptive management responses to resource allocation issues and the emerging effects of climate change on interstate fisheries resources. Guiding all these activities will be our new 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, providing us the tools and a roadmap to capitalize on new opportunities, strengthen our partnerships, and address the challenges ahead.

Thank you to all of our Commissioners, staff, federal partners and stakeholders for your continued support during my first year as Executive Director. 2013 was filled with its share of ups and downs, but as the year comes to a close we can all look back and be proud of what we accomplished. Because of the outstanding people that make up the Commission family, I believe we are prepared to meet any challenges 2014 may have in store for us. I extend to you all best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

## Species Profile: Summer Flounder

### States Explore Changes to Recreational Management to Allow for More Equitable Harvest Opportunities Throughout Species Range

#### Introduction

Highly valued by both recreational and commercial fishermen, summer flounder have been jointly managed by the Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) for more than two decades. The population is now fully rebuilt in response to the joint management program, with current spawning stock biomass estimated at 125.97 million pounds, slightly below the target of 137.55 million pounds. Summer flounder are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The Commission and MAFMC established a 21.94 million pound total allowable landings (TAL) for the 2014 fishing season, with the recreational harvest limit (RHL) set at 7.01 million pounds and the commercial quota set at 10.51 million pounds. Up to three percent of the TAL is allocated to the Research Set Aside program in 2014.

There has been a growing concern that current summer flounder management measures (as established under the Fishery Management Plan) are not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities. Those measures, involving state-specific recreational management measures under conservation equivalency are increasingly being viewed as problematic due to reliance upon recreational harvest estimates for a single year (1998) as the basis for individual state targets, and changes in both resource abundance and the socio-economic characteristics of the fishery. To address these issues, the Commission approved Draft Addendum XXV for public comment in December. Draft Addendum XXV includes options that allow for management measures by region and the sharing of unused RHL – both with the intent of providing more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast (see page 6 for more information on the Draft Addendum).



Paul Caruso (MA DMF) and Jessica Coakley (MAFMC) with a summer flounder caught off of Cape Cod, MA. Photo by ASMFC.

#### Life History

Summer flounder are found in inshore and offshore waters from Nova Scotia, Canada to the east coast of Florida. In the U.S., they are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic region from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Fear, North Carolina. Summer flounder usually begin to spawn at age two or three, at lengths of about ten inches. Spawning occurs in the fall while the fish are moving offshore. Spawning migration is linked to sexual maturity, with the oldest and largest fish migrating first. Following the seasonal migrations, spawning summer flounder in the northern portion of the geographic range spawn and move offshore (depths of 120 to 600 feet) earlier than those in the southern part of the range. Larvae migrate to inshore coastal and estuarine areas from October to May. The larvae, or fry, move to bottom waters upon reaching the coast and spend their first year in bays and other inshore areas. At the end of their first year, some juveniles join the adult offshore migration.

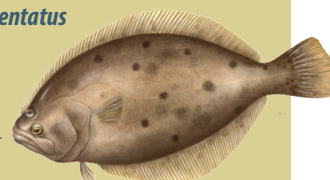
Adults spend most of their life on or near the sea bottom burrowing in sandy substrate. Flounder lie in ambush and wait for their prey. They are quick and efficient predators with well-developed teeth allowing them to capture small fish, squid, sea worms, shrimp, and other crustaceans. A great fishing technique to take advantage of their ambush behavior is to fish close to bottom with moving bait.

#### Species Snapshot

##### Summer Flounder *Paralichthys dentatus*

##### Management Unit:

Massachusetts -  
North Carolina



**Common Name:** Fluke

##### Interesting Facts:

- Left-eyed flatfish (both eyes on left side of body when viewed from above with top fin facing up).
- Summer flounder begin with their eyes on both sides of their body; the right eye migrates to the left side in 20-32 days.
- Summer flounder are called chameleons of the sea because of their ability to match the bottom on which they are found.

**Largest Recorded:** 30 pounds, 48 inches  
(Source: MD DNR).

**Age at Maturity:** 50% mature at age 1 (9.8 inches) for males and age 1.5 (11 inches) for females.

**Stock Status:** Rebuilt; not overfished or experiencing overfishing

## Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Summer flounder are one of the most sought after commercial and recreational fish along the Atlantic coast, with landings at approximately 19.62 million pounds in 2012. Using baseline data from 1980 to 1989, the current plan allocates the summer flounder quota on a 60/40 percent basis to commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively.

Two major commercial trawl fisheries exist — a winter offshore and a summer inshore. Summer flounder are also taken by pound nets and gillnets in estuarine waters. Throughout the 1980s, commercial landings ranged from 21 to 38 million pounds. By 1990, landings reached a low of nine million pounds and have since fluctuated between nine and 17 million pounds. In 1993, the coastwide quota was implemented for the first time, setting a commercial landings limit of 12.35 million pounds. Commercial quotas have since ranged from 9.46 to 18.18 million pounds. Commercial landings (which are limited by the quota) have ranged from 8.81 million pounds to 18.17 million pounds since 1993. 2012 commercial landings were estimated at 13.33 million pounds.

Summer flounder are also highly prized in the recreational fishery. Anglers catch summer flounder from the shore, piers, and boats with hook and line. From 1980 through 2004, recreational landings varied widely from a high of 38 million pounds in 1980 to a low of three million pounds in 1989. Starting in 1993, harvest limits were implemented for the recreational fishery. From 1993 to 2011, landings ranged from 5.1 to 16.5 million pounds. 2012 recreational harvest was estimated at 6.29 million pounds (Figure 1).

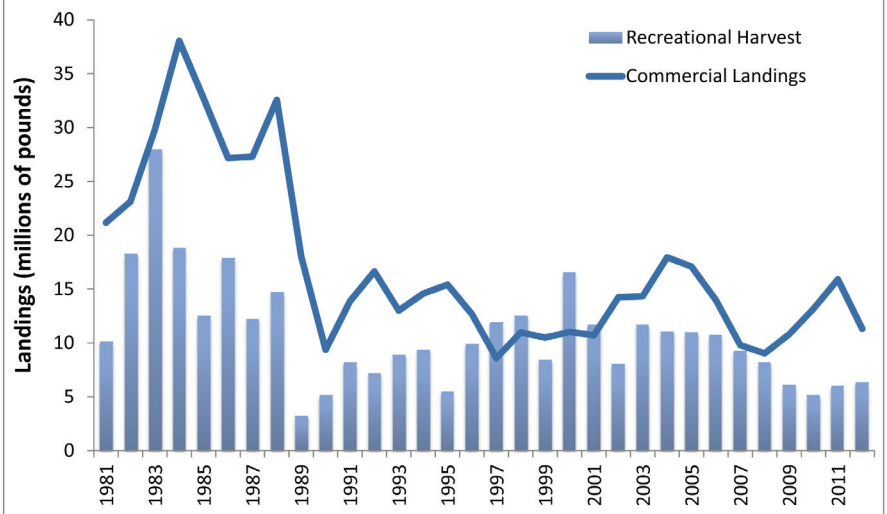
## Stock Status

The 2013 benchmark stock assessment indicates the stock was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2012 relative to the biological reference points. The fishing mortality rate was estimated to be 0.285 in 2012, well below the threshold fishing mortality reference point of 0.309. Spawning stock biomass was estimated to be 125.97 million pounds in 2012, just below the biomass target of 137.55 million pounds. The stock was determined to be rebuilt in 2010 (Figure 2).

Since 1982, average recruitment (the number of juvenile fish that will be able to reproduce that year) has been 43 million fish. The largest class was in 1983 at 76 million fish and the

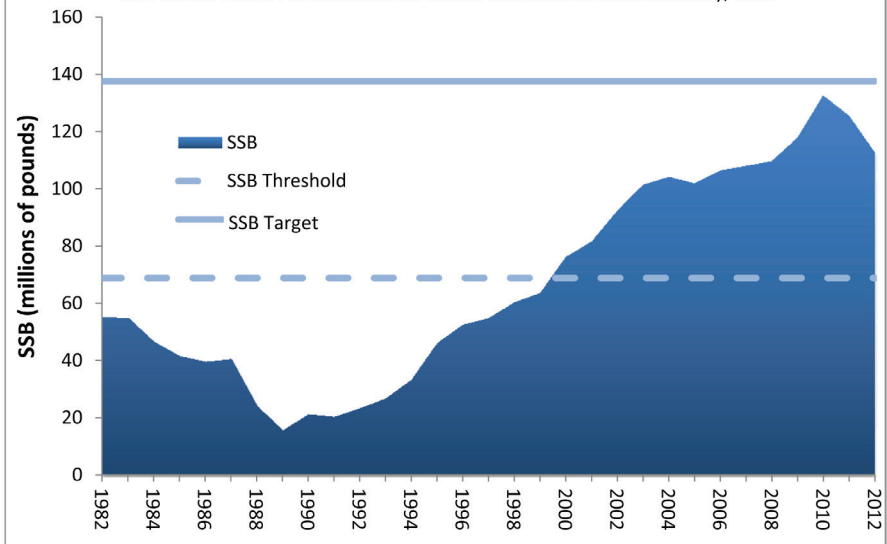
**Figure 1. Summer Flounder Commercial Landings & Recreational Harvest**

Source: Personal communication NMFS Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD, 2013



**Figure 2. Summer Flounder Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)**

Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center Stock Assessment Summary, 2013



*Timeline of Management Actions: FMP ('88); Amendment 1 ('91); Amendments 2-5 ('93); Amendment 6 ('94); Amendment 7 ('95); Amendment 8 & 9 ('96); Amendment 10 ('97); Amendment 11 ('98); Amendment 12 ('99); Amendment 13 ('03); Addenda VIII & XV ('04); Addenda XVI & XVII ('05); Addendum XVIII ('06); Addendum XIX ('07)*

lowest was in 1988 at 10 million fish. The 2012 year class is estimated to be 37 million fish.

## Atlantic Coastal Management

The Commission approved the first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Summer Flounder in 1982, followed by a similar FMP approved by the MAFMC in 1988. Since then, both agencies have made significant revisions to the plan, increasing the protection of juvenile fish and ensuring the maintenance of an adequate spawning population. This increased protection was achieved through the implementation of larger minimum size limits across

*continued, see SUMMER FLOUNDER on page 8*

## Proposed Management Actions

### Summer Flounder & Black Sea Bass Draft Addendum XXV Proposes Management Options for 2014 Recreational Fisheries

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Draft Addendum XXV to gather public comment on proposed 2014 management approaches for summer flounder and black sea bass recreational fisheries. For summer flounder, the Draft Addendum includes options that allow for management measures by region and the sharing of unused quota – both with the intent of providing more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast. The specific regions being considered are (1) Massachusetts; Rhode Island through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina and (2) Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina.

Draft Addendum XXV was initiated to address a growing concern that current summer flounder management measures (as established under the Fishery Management Plan) are not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities. Those measures, involving state-specific recreational management measures under conservation equivalency are increasingly being viewed as problematic due to several factors. These factors include: reliance upon recreational harvest estimates for a single year (1998) as the basis for individual state targets; a change in the abundance of the resource; and changes in the socioeconomic characteristics of the fishery. The impact of the management program seemed to affect New York the most, with a 21" size limit (by 2009) and a short season including mid-season closure. In 2013, with a fully recovered stock, New York's minimum size (19") was at least one inch higher than any other state, and one and a half inches higher than its bordering states.

The Draft Addendum proposes a more flexible and equitable conservation approach that allows the management program to adjust to past, current, and future changes to the resource and the fishery. The biological characteristics of the summer flounder have changed with the restoration of this stock. In particular, there has been a substantial expansion in the size and age composition, with greater overall abundance and increased numbers of larger fish.

The Draft Addendum also proposes two options for the 2014 black sea bass recreational fishery (1) coastwide measures (currently proposed at 13" TL minimum size, a 5 fish possession limit, and a season from June 1 to September 30) or (2) the continued use of management measures by northern (MA –

*continued, see DRAFT ADDENDUM XXV on page 10*

### ASMFC Winter Meeting Public Comment Guidelines

With the intent of developing policies in the Commission's procedures for public participation that result in a fair opportunity for public input, the ISFMP Policy Board has approved the following guidelines for use at management board meetings:

**For issues that are not on the agenda**, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

**For topics that are on the agenda, but have not gone out for public comment**, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

**For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment**, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

- Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of a meeting week will be included on the briefing CD.
- Comments received by 5:00 PM on the Tuesday immediately preceding the scheduled ASMFC Meeting (in this case, the Tuesday deadline will be January 21, 2014) will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.
- Following the Tuesday, January 21, 2014 5:00 PM deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for the management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, it will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

## Fish Ageing: The Science of Estimating a Fish's Birth Year and Why It is So Important

As fish age and grow, bands of biominerals, like calcium carbonate, are incrementally deposited around the core of anatomical hard structures. During periods of fast metabolism and growth, which usually occur in warmer seasons, bands form a translucent, or hyaline, zone. Bands deposited during periods of slow metabolism and growth, characteristic of winter, form an opaque zone. One translucent zone and one opaque zone typically represent one year of growth. Viewing the ageing structure under a microscope, fishery scientists are able to count the number of alternating zones and estimate the age of the fish (Figures 1 & 2). Different structures can be used to estimate age, depending on the species and size of the organism. The most common structures are scales and otoliths, which are a bone-like structure in a fish's inner ear. Other structures used for ageing are opercula (tautog), shells (bivalve species), fin spines (spiny dogfish), and even vertebrae (shark species).

Fish ages are essential for age-structured models that stock assessment scientists use to evaluate the biological characteristics and status of fish stocks. Age is used in conjunction with fish length and maturity to determine growth rates, the age at which fish are selected by gears used in fisheries, and the age at which fish typically become mature and reproduce. Ageing a representative sample of fish provides information on the age structure of the stock and allows year classes of fish to be tracked over time (Figure 3). Changes to age-related biological characteristics and the age structure of the stock inform fishery scientists and managers about the stock's response to fishing.

Interpretation of ageing structures can be difficult and there will always be uncertainty in the estimates of fish ages. Ageing error can lead to biased model estimates and quality control must be established to understand and account for the uncertainty inherent in fish ageing. Ageing techniques need to be validated to confirm that ages are accurately estimated. A unique method of validation is radiocarbon testing for long-lived species such as black drum. Increased radiocarbon from nuclear bomb testing in the 1950s and 1960s was absorbed in ocean waters and a peak in carbon can actually be identified in the ageing structure if the fish was alive during this time, providing a time stamp on the ageing structure that can be compared to estimated ages. Precision of age estimates should also be tested on a continuing basis, as age readers will change over time. Precision tests quantify how consistently an age estimate

is assigned to an ageing structure when multiple readers age the structure or when the same reader ages the structure multiple times. Precision tests can be used to incorporate ageing error in stock assessment model estimates.

To help facilitate consistency in ageing techniques and use of the associated data in stock assessments, the Commission coordinates workshops to investigate techniques used at different laboratories ageing the same species. River herring (alewife and blueback herring) were the species of focus during the most recent ageing workshop this December at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Marine Headquarters in Old Lyme. Ageing workshop reports are also available for American eel, American shad, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic striped bass, black sea bass, bluefish, red drum, tautog and winter flounder on the Commission's webpage at <http://www.asmf.org/fisheries-science/research>. For more information, please contact Jeff Kipp, Stock Assessment Scientist at [jkipp@asmfc.org](mailto:jkipp@asmfc.org).

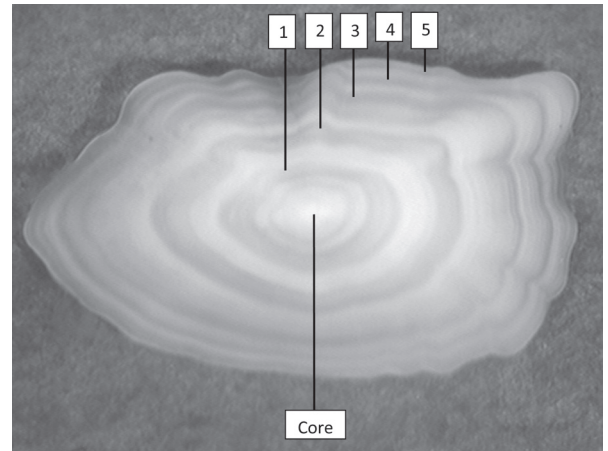


Figure 1. Otolith collected from a 29 cm male winter flounder during the Northeast Fisheries Science Center 1993 Summer Bottom Trawl Survey in the Gulf of Maine. Aged as 5+.

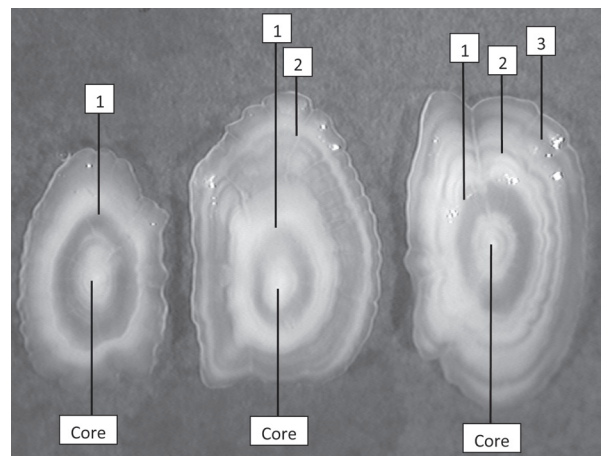


Figure 2. Winter flounder otoliths collected during the Northeast Fisheries Science Center 2000 Autumn Bottom Trawl Survey in the Southern New England region. Left to right: a 23 cm female aged as 1+, a 30 cm female aged as 2+, and a 35 cm female aged as 3+.

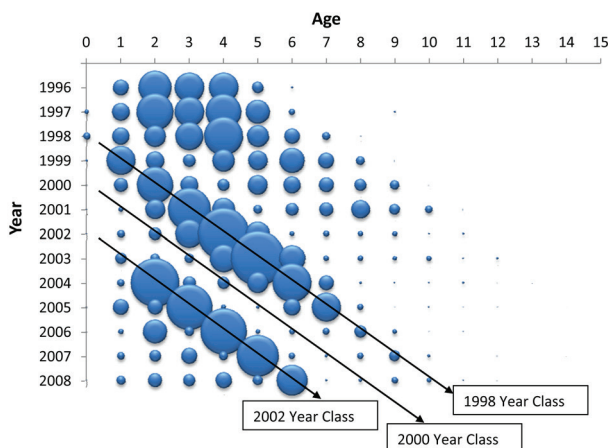


Figure 3. Catch-at-age of Atlantic croaker. Circle size is proportional to the number of fish. The arrows follow the large 1998 and 2002 year classes and the smaller 2000 year class.

### Summer Flounder Management

Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) has introduced S. 1757, the Fluke Fairness Act, in the U.S. Senate. The legislation directs the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, in consultation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, to discontinue allocation of summer flounder catch quotas on a state-by-state basis and instead develop a regional management system. In the past, Congress has generally left the Councils and Commissions, in conjunction with the Department of Commerce, to work out species specific allocation issues. Congress interceding on summer flounder management is a relatively unique step. The prospects for advancement of S. 1757 are uncertain at this time, but staff will continue to monitor its progress.

### Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The 2007 Authorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act expired on September 30, 2013. On December 19, Representative Doc Hastings (R-WA), Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, unveiled a discussion draft of the reauthorization bill. It is entitled the "Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries

Management Act" and is available on the Committee's website ([naturalresources.house.gov](http://naturalresources.house.gov)) for review and comment. On the other side of the Capitol, the Senate has indicated it will introduce draft reauthorization text early in 2014. The prospects for enactment of a Magnuson-



Stevens Act reauthorization in 2014 remain unclear due to a busy legislative schedule and elections in the fall of 2014. In 2013, the House Natural Resources Committee held four Magnuson related hearings. Meanwhile, the Senate Commerce Committee held three hearings in 2013. The hearings examined various topics, including data collection,

sustainability certification, and a number of regional issues. ASMFC Executive Director Bob Beal testified at two of the hearings: "Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act" in the Senate and "Data collection issues in relation to the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act" in the House.

### Fiscal Year 2014 Funding Update

It is anticipated that in late December the President will sign the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 into law. This is encouraging news to the Commission for two reasons. First, it provides relief from automatic sequester cuts scheduled for 2014 and 2015. Second, it makes enactment of a 2014 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill possible. The CJS bill funds the Department of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries, and the Commission. As noted earlier in the year, the draft House and Senate CJS bills for 2014 boost funding for the Atlantic Coast Act and Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act.

For more information, please contact Deke Tompkins, Legislative Executive Assistant, at [dtompkins@asmfc.org](mailto:dtompkins@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740

#### *SUMMER FLOUNDER, continued from page 5*

all sectors, increased mesh sizes, and decreased recreational possession limits. Cumulatively, these changes have contributed to rebuilding the resource. This is not to say that challenges in managing this species do not still exist. Issues related to sector allocation and annual harvest levels persist.

Through Draft Addendum XV, which is currently out for public comment, managers are considering regional management measures and allowing for the sharing of additional RHL for the 2014 fishery with a possible extension of measures into 2015. A working group of Commissioners has been established to seek long-term solutions that recognize the changing characteristics of the fishery with the intent of maximizing recreational harvest opportunities (see page XX for more information on Draft Addendum XV). It is anticipated a review of the commercial management process will be conducted in 2014.

For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.





## ACCSP Elects New Chair

At the Commission's Annual Meeting in St. Simons Island, GA, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Coordinating Council gratefully acknowledged the dedication and accomplishments of outgoing Chair Mark Alexander (CT DEEP) and elected Ms. Cheri Patterson, Supervisor of Marine Programs with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NH FGD), as its new Chair.

Over the last two years, Mr. Alexander's leadership was instrumental in facilitating the work of a select group of Coordinating Council members as they led the charge on the Independent Program Review (IPR). The IPR, conducted throughout 2012, provided a comprehensive assessment of the Program and included extensive interviews and surveys of fisheries managers, scientists and other ACCSP stakeholders. Following the IPR review, Mr. Alexander worked closely with members of the ACCSP Operations Committee and staff to complete a document in response to IPR final report. Mr. Alexander also played a lead role in reinvigorating the Executive Committee through bimonthly conference calls as well as meetings prior to each Coordinating Council meeting to discuss and make recommendations on major Program initiatives.

Ms. Patterson has worked for the NH FGD for more than three decades, significantly contributing to the management of New Hampshire's marine and diadromous species and the fisheries that depend on these resources through extensive field work and research. A firm believer in the importance of quality and timely data for fisheries management, Ms. Patterson has been an integral part of the ACCSP since the Program began in 1995. She has participated on several technical committees and chaired the Operations Committee before becoming a member of the Coordinating Council. As she takes on her new role we asked Ms. Patterson to reflect on her experiences with ACCSP.

### What is the value of ACCSP and what do you think is the greatest asset to the Program?

The value of ACCSP is very well stated in the ACCSP's Vision Statement to ultimately provide the best available data for better fisheries management decisions. The greatest asset of the ACCSP is the cooperative committee process of the program partners and the ACCSP staff. The ACCSP would not be where it is without the commitment of the partners and hardworking staff.

### What is the most significant contribution ACCSP has made to fisheries data along the Atlantic coast since 1995?

Its greatest contributions have been its role in bringing program partners together to work towards a common goal and developing common fisheries-dependent data standards to ensure compatible and comparable data sets.

### In what ways has ACCSP enhanced fisheries management for the NH FGD?

The ACCSP has allowed the NH FGD to develop its fisheries data collection programs based on common standards. As an agency that has guardianship responsibilities for New Hampshire's marine resources and is an engaged partner in several fisheries management organizations it is important to maintain reliable data in such a dynamic ecosystem for effective management.

## ACCSP Welcomes New Fisheries Data Coordinator

In January, Joseph Myers will be joining the ACCSP staff as its new Fisheries Data Coordinator. As Data Coordinator, Joe will be responsible for providing support and assistance in the compilation, analysis, use and dissemination of data collected and stored by the ACCSP. He will also represent the ACCSP at various stock assessment activities and will be participating in the stock assessment process as needed. Joe last worked for the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve in Texas where he monitored, analyzed and reported on the state of the water quality within the Mission-Aransas Estuary to assist in the development of a Nutrient Criteria Plan for Texas bays with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. Prior to that, he managed an annual fisheries survey which monitors coastal populations across +400 km of northern Gulf of Mexico coastline funded through the NOAA Northern Gulf Institute. Joe has a Master of Science from the University of South Alabama, Dauphin Island Sea Lab and a Bachelor of Science from Stony Brook University, New York. Welcome, Joe!



### What are your short-term and long-term goals as Chair of the Coordinating Council?

Following in the footsteps of the previous hardworking Council Chairs, I hope to continue to provide for an open environment of cooperation and communication for the ACCSP partners and staff. This, I believe, will allow this Program's unique committee process to be highly effective in achieving our goals and advancing our strategic planning to stay current in the dynamic management processes along the Atlantic coastal fisheries.

**ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program that designs, implements, and conducts marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and integrates those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. For more information about ACCSP, please visit <http://www.accsp.org/>.**

## Proposed Management Actions (continued)

*DRAFT ADDENDUM XXV, continued from page 6*

NJ) and southern regions (DE – NC). The regional management approach has been used since 2011 and offers some advantages over coastwide regulations, which can disproportionately impact states within the management unit. Specifically, regional measures can address geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance and seasonality) while maintaining the consistent application of management measures by neighboring states.

The Atlantic coast states of Massachusetts through Virginia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum XXV. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled hearings follow.

### Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

*January 16, 2014 at 5 PM*

Bourne Fire Station #3, Meeting Room  
53 Meetinghouse Lane  
Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts  
Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

### Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

*January 15, 2014 at 6 PM*

University of Rhode Island  
Corless Auditorium  
South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, Rhode Island  
Contact: Jason McNamee at 401.423.1943

### Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

*January 14, 2014 at 7 PM*

Marine Headquarters  
Boating Education Center, Building 3  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Contact: David Simpson at 860.434.6043

### New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

*January 14, 2014 at 6 PM*

Bureau of Marine Resources  
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1  
East Setauket, New York  
Contact: Steve Heins at 631.444.0435

### New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

*January 13, 2014 at 7 PM*

Ocean County Administration Building  
Public Hearing Room 119  
101 Hooper Avenue  
Toms River, New Jersey  
Contact: Tom Baum at 609.748.2020

### Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

*January 10, 2014 at 6 PM*

DNREC Auditorium  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover, Delaware  
Contact: John Clark at 302.739.9108

### Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

*January 9, 2014 at 5 PM*

Ocean Pines Library  
11107 Cathell Road  
Berlin, Maryland  
Contact: Steve Doctor at 410.213.1431

### Virginia Marine Resources Commission

*January 8, 2014 at 6 PM*

2600 Washington Avenue  
4th Floor Commission Room  
Newport News, Virginia  
Contact: Rob O'Reilly at 757.247.2247

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXV, either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available on the Commission website on the Public Input page at <http://www.asmf.org/about-us/public-input>. It can also be accessed directly at [http://www.asmf.org/files/PublicInput/SF\\_BSB\\_DraftAddendumXXV\\_PublicComment\\_Dec2013.pdf](http://www.asmf.org/files/PublicInput/SF_BSB_DraftAddendumXXV_PublicComment_Dec2013.pdf).

Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on January 24, 2014 and should be forwarded to:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy  
Fishery Management Plan Coordinator  
1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703.842.0741 (fax)  
or via email at  
[krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org)  
(Subject line: Draft Addendum XXV)

## Deke Tompkins Receives ASMFC Employee of the Quarter



In a little over nine months with the Commission, Deke Tompkins has proven to be an invaluable asset, helping to advance the Commission's legislative activities and foster relationships with many congressional offices that are important to Atlantic states and the appropriations process. For his exemplary efforts, Deke was named Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of 2013. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.

During his time with the Commission, Deke has played an important role in drafting congressional testimony, supporting the work of our Legislative and Governor Appointed Commissioners, and developing high quality legislative products that effectively convey the Commission's programs and priorities. His efforts have led to an increased and effective ASMFC presence on Capitol Hill.

Deke's relaxed attitude and willingness to work with others makes him a great addition to the Commission staff. Deke has a Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy and Administration from Michigan State University. As Employee of the Quarter Award, Deke received a cash award, a small gift, a letter of appreciation placed in his personnel folder, and his name engraved on the plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Deke!



## Commissioners & Proxies

### Nancy A. Addison

In October, Ms. Nancy Addison was appointed by Georgia's Governor Nathan Deal to serve as the state's Governor Appointee to the Commission. Ms. Addison replaces John Duren who served in that position from 2005 through January 2013. Currently serving on the Georgia Board of Natural Resources and Chair of the North Georgia Mountains Authority, Ms. Addison is also Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for Health Service Centers, Inc. She is a corporate advisor for Southern Woods Plantation and a Director of Majormatic, a South Africa-based company. Ms. Addison serves on the Greater Atlanta Chapter Board of Safari Club International and the Safari Club International Foundation Advisory Board. She has three children and resides in Savannah. Welcome aboard, Ms. Addison!

### Peter Himchak

In December, Peter Himchak retired after 39 years with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife at its Nacote Creek Research Station. Mr. Himchak's participation in the Commission extends as far back as the early 1980s when he first served as the state's technical committee representative for striped bass, Atlantic menhaden, tautog and horseshoe crab. He was also an active and long-standing member of the Commission's Management & Science Committee. For at least the past ten years, Mr. Himchak represented New Jersey on a number of species management boards, as well as the NEAMAP Board and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council. Throughout his career and his involvement with the Commission, Mr. Himchak demonstrated a profound commitment to fisheries conservation and management, and to the Commission's collaborative process. We are grateful for all his contributions and efforts, and wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

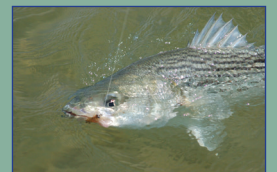
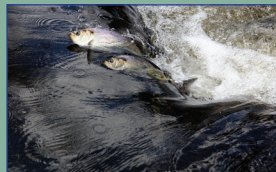


## Atlantic Diadromous Fish Habitat Source Document Available

***Looking for the most comprehensive compilation of habitat information to date on Commission-managed diadromous species (American eel, American and hickory shad, alewife herring, blueback herring, Atlantic sturgeon, and Atlantic striped bass)?***

Then the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission publication, *Atlantic Coast Diadromous Fish Habitat: A Review of Utilization, Threats, Recommendations for Conservation, and Research Needs*, is the resource for you! The report's primary focus is on inshore and nearshore habitats along the Atlantic coast for all life stages of Atlantic coast diadromous species and was developed to serve as a resource for fisheries managers to use when amending existing fishery management plan (FMPs). Furthermore, maps that were developed using a GIS interface provide an all-inclusive source of spawning habitat information for Commission-managed diadromous species. The 460 page report is accompanied by a DVD Supplement including the GIS maps and tables on spawning rivers, spawning habitat locations, peak locations, and temperatures.

**Limited copies are available, so please contact the Commission at [info@asmfc.org](mailto:info@asmfc.org) if you would like to receive the report. Act quickly because these reports will only be available only through early 2014.**

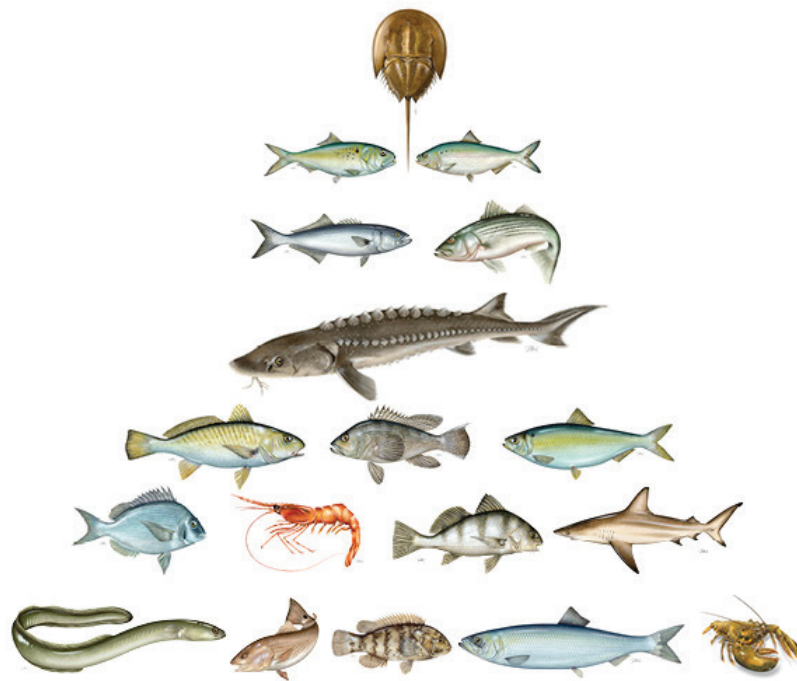


**Atlantic States Marine  
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